

**MINUTES OF THE
VETERANS' AND MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMISSION**
Wednesday, May 27, 2015 – 9:00 a.m. – Room 30 House Building

Members Present:

Sen. Peter C. Knudson, Senate Chair
Rep. Paul Ray, House Chair
Sen. Karen Mayne
Rep. Val L. Peterson
Rep. Marie H. Poulson
Dr. Steven Allen
MG Jefferson S. Burton
Dr. Blair K. Carruth
Mr. Tim M. Cosgrove
Mr. Bart Davis
Mr. Tage I. Flint
Mr. Brian Garrett
Mr. George Gutzmer
Mr. Gary Harter
Mr. Johnnie B. Janes

Mr. Jon Pierpont
Mr. Terry D. Schow

Members Absent:

Dr. Mark E. Babitz
Mr. Jared A. Haines
Mr. Frank Maughan
Mr. Greg Rowley
Mr. Rick Schwermer
Ms. Ann Williamson

Staff Present:

Mr. Richard C. North, Policy Analyst
Ms. Esther Chelsea-McCarty, Associate General Counsel
Ms. Tracey Fredman, Legislative Secretary

Note: A list of others present, a copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at www.le.utah.gov.

1. Committee Business

Chair Knudson called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. and welcomed Rep. Marie Poulson as a member of the commission. Chair Knudson excused Mr. Maughan, Mr. Rowley, Mr. Schwermer, and Ms. Williamson from the meeting, and recognized Mr. Paul Patrick, Deputy Director, Utah Department of Health, who was in attendance for Dr. Babitz, and Mr. Joe Mena, Student Development and Veteran Services Coordinator for Tooele Applied Technology College, who was in attendance for Mr. Haines.

MOTION: Mr. Cosgrove moved to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2014, meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Rep. Petersen and Mr. Garrett were absent for the vote.

2. 2015 General Session Wrap-Up: Legislation Report

Ms. Chelsea-McCarty referred commission members to "Passed Bills by Subject – 2015 Annual General Session, Military Services," which was distributed in the mailing packet. Ms. Chelsea-McCarty briefly highlighted provisions of H.B. 36, "Veterans Definition," H. B. 232, "Veteran Employment Protection Act," H.B. 382, "Utah National Guard Fund Amendments," and S.J.R. 14, "Joint Resolution Supporting Creation of a GI Bill for the Utah National Guard."

Mr. Harter provided an update on the implementation of 2015 General Session H.B. 205, "Veteran Claim Assistance Disclosure."

3. Utah Veterans Memorial Park: Ft. Douglas

Sen. Mayne distributed a letter dated February 19, 2015, from the Fort Douglas Military Museum and a flyer about the second annual "Day to Remember our Fallen Heroes" event.

Mr. Dave Belcher, managing partner, Mountain Crane Service, LLC, briefed the commission on how he and his wife, Raette, became involved with the Utah Fallen Warrior Memorial program to raise funds in support of Utah veterans and the park.

Mrs. Raette Belcher distributed "Tour of Utah Schedule" and "Utah Fallen Warrior Memorial In-Kind and Cash Donors to Date." Mrs. Belcher shared several stories and photographs of what transpired during their road trip across the state and expressed the importance of the memorial park to veterans and their families.

Mr. Robert Voyles, retired Col. and Curator, Fort Douglas Military Museum, briefed the commission on the history, purpose, and vision of the museum, which belongs to the Utah National Guard. He attributed much of the success of Utah's Fallen Warrior Memorial to the work of Mr. and Mrs. Dave Belcher and noted that the work was accomplished within four months through much labor and generous funding received exclusively from private sector donations.

Mr. Dan Hudson, chair, Utah Veterans and Military Affairs Committee, distributed "Utah Military Women's Memorial" and briefed the commission on the project, which is also at the Fort Douglas Military Museum site.

MOTION: Mr. Cosgrove moved that the commission send a letter of appreciation to those who have donated time and funding to the Utah Military Women's Memorial project. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Knudson asked Mr. Voyles for a prioritized list of museum projects. Mr. Voyles was agreeable to providing that information to the commission.

4. Line of Death Benefits: Utah National Guard

Col David Osborne, Director, Family Support, and Chaplain Gerald White, Director, State Family Program, Utah National Guard, distributed and presented "Utah State Benefits, Utah National Guard Death Entitlements." Chaplain White briefed the commission on federal and state benefits and services available to active duty servicemembers.

Chaplain White stated that federal benefits include such things as:

- VA benefits claim assistance;
- Education;
- Employment;
- Healthcare;
- Burial;
- Veterans Resources Registry;
- VA home loan program; and
- Life insurance.

In comparison to federal benefits, Chaplain White indicated that state benefits are not clearly defined for servicemembers who go on state active duty, and he discussed immediate needs, including workman's compensation, injury, long-term disability, and death benefits for servicemembers and their spouses and dependents.

Rep. Ray noted that he has already opened a bill file to address the issues presented. He asked commission members for input.

5. Commission Study Items /Site Meetings: Recommendations and Discussions

Chair Knudson referenced "Potential Study Topics – 2015," which was distributed in the mailing packet and opened a discussion about potential additions to the list.

Ms. Carolyn Fick, Local Recovery Coordinator, VA Medical Center, asked the commission to consider supporting a peer supportive specialist program.

6. Other Business / Adjourn

MOTION: Rep. Peterson moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Rep. Ray was absent for the vote.

Chair Knudson adjourned the meeting at 11:15 a.m.